

**SUBSTRATE HAVING A ZINC OXIDE NANOWIRE ARRAY  
NORMAL TO ITS SURFACE AND FABRICATION METHOD  
THEREOF**

5 **BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a vertical zinc oxide nanowire array on a substrate, and a related fabrication method. More particularly, the present invention discloses a method for forming an array of zinc oxide  
10 nanowires during a semiconductor process, which may be utilized to design an optoelectronic device with nano structure characteristics.

2. Description of the Related Art

US Patent No. 5,897,945 discloses metal oxide nanorods, and  
15 composite materials containing such nanorods. The metal oxide nanorods have diameters between 1 and 200 nm, and aspect ratios between 5 and 2000.

US Patent No. 6,036,774 discloses methods of preparing metal oxide nanorods. The metal oxide nanorods have diameters between 1 and 200 nm and aspect ratios between 5 and 2000. The methods include the steps of  
20 generating a metal vapor in a furnace, exposing the nanorod growth substrate to the metal vapor within a growth zone in the furnace for a sufficient time to grow metal oxide nanorods on a surface of the nanorod growth substrate, removing the nanorod growth substrate from the growth zone after the



sufficient time to grow metal oxide nanorods on a surface of the nanorod growth substrate has elapsed, and removing the metal oxide nanorods from the furnace. The methods can be used to prepare large quantities of metal oxide nanorods.

5           It is desirable, however, to provide an improved method for generating a zinc oxide nanowire array on a substrate.

### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

10           A main objective of the present invention is to provide a simplified zinc oxide nanowire process, and a method for forming an array of zinc oxide nanowires during a semiconductor process. The present invention provides a substrate having a zinc oxide nanowire array normal to its surface, and discloses a fabrication method thereof. The fabrication method uses surface crystal phase characteristic adjustment and a process  
15       compatible with semiconductor and optoelectronic industry processes, instead of the vapor-liquid-solid deposition process using a catalyst implantation. In the other words, the present invention uses a common silicon wafer having a crystal orientation of <100> or a sapphire substrate, and a low temperature vapor deposition process (lower than or close to  
20       550°C) to form vertical zinc oxide nanowires on the zinc oxide layer. The first method grows a compound layer having an oxide layer, a silicon nitride layer and a doped zinc oxide layer to change the crystal lattice characteristic, and cooperates with growth condition controls of a simple zinc vapor deposition process to grow a zinc oxide layer on the compound layer of the

silicon substrate. Then, by adjusting furnace vapor reaction conditions, vertical zinc oxide nanowires are grown on the zinc oxide layer. The second method grows a gallium nitride epitaxial layer on a sapphire substrate to change surface crystal phase characteristics and cooperate with the same zinc vapor deposition process to grow 1D zinc oxide nanowires vertical to the substrate.

In order to achieve the above-mentioned objectives, in the present invention, a substrate with a vertical zinc oxide nanowire array includes:

a substrate;

a crystal phase adjusting buffer on a surface of the substrate; and

a nanowire compound layer;

wherein the nanowire compound layer comprises a zinc oxide layer on the crystal phase adjusting buffer, a vertical zinc oxide nanowire array on the zinc oxide layer, and the zinc oxide nanowires have diameters of 15-500 nm and aspect ratios of 3-300.

the substrate is a single crystal, polycrystal or amorphous substrate with micrometer or nano-sized pores, or an irregular surface structure, such as sapphire, magnesia, lithium niobate, strontium titanate, barium titanate, aluminum oxide, quartz, zirconia, glass or a silicon wafer.

Preferably, the crystal phase adjusting buffer is a single or multiple layer film made of metal, oxide or nitride.

Preferably, the substrate is a silicon wafer, the crystal phase adjusting buffer comprises a silicon dioxide layer, a silicon nitride layer and a doped zinc oxide layer, with respective thickness of 0.01-1 micrometers, 0.01-1

micrometers and 0.01-10 micrometers. The doped zinc oxide layer in the crystal phase adjusting buffer comprises a doping element selected from the group consisting of Al, Ga, Si, Ge, B, Ti, Sn, Mg, In, Cr, P and Zn.

Preferably, the substrate is a sapphire substrate, and the crystal phase  
5 adjusting buffer is a gallium nitride epitaxial layer with a thickness of 0.01-10 micrometers.

Preferably, the zinc oxide layer of the nanowire compound layer has a thickness of 0.2-12 micrometers.

The present invention further provides a method for forming an array  
10 of zinc oxide nanowires on a substrate, which includes:

a) forming a crystal phase adjusting buffer on the surface of the substrate; and

b) growing 1D zinc oxide nanowires on the crystal phase adjusting buffer, which comprises: b1) generating a zinc vapor in a first vacuum  
15 chamber and exposing the substrate with the crystal phase adjusting buffer to the zinc vapor to grow a zinc oxide layer on the crystal phase adjusting buffer; and b2) generating another zinc vapor in a second vacuum chamber and exposing the substrate with the zinc oxide layer to the zinc vapor to form vertical zinc oxide nanowires on the zinc oxide layer, the zinc oxide  
20 nanowires having diameters of 15-500 nm and aspect ratios between 3-300.

In this method, step b1) process conditions include: a vacuum value of the first vacuum chamber being 1-300 Torr; a heating temperature for generating the zinc vapor in the first vacuum chamber being 400°C~550°C; argon gas at 50-200 sccm flowing through the first vacuum chamber having

0.1-5% by volume of moisture and oxygen; and a reaction time between 1~60 minutes; wherein the substrate is placed a downstream position in the argon gas flow, relative to where the zinc vapor is generated, and with a temperature difference from the heating temperature by -80~100°C.

5            In this method, step b2) process conditions include: a vacuum value of the second vacuum chamber is 1-300 Torr; a heating temperature for generating the zinc vapor in the second vacuum chamber being 480°C~600°C; argon gas at 20-100 sccm flowing through the second vacuum chamber having 1-20% by volume of moisture and oxygen; and a  
10 reaction time between 10~120 minutes; wherein the substrate is placed at a downstream position in the argon gas flow, relative to where the zinc vapor is generated, and with a temperature difference from the heating temperature by -80~100°C.

            Preferably, in both steps b1) and b2) the zinc vapor is generated by  
15 heating metal zinc in the form of powder, wire or block; or by heating zinc oxide powder in a reduction atmosphere.

            Preferably, in both steps b1) and b2) the zinc vapor is generated by heating diethylzinc gas, solid of zinc acetyl acetonate salt which can be sublimated, zinc acetate, zinc 2-ethyl-hexanoate or zinc alkoxide salts.

20            Preferably, in both steps b1) and b2) the first vacuum chamber and the second vacuum chamber are the same vacuum chamber.

            Other objects, advantages, and novel features of the invention will become more apparent from the following detailed description when taken

in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a field-emission scanning electron microscopy (FESEM)  
5 image showing a side view of a needle zinc oxide nanowire structure  
according to a first embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 2 is a high-resolution TEM (HRTEM) image of an individual  
zinc oxide nanowire showing its [001] growth direction according to the  
first embodiment of the present invention. The inset shows the  
10 corresponding selected-area electron diffraction pattern from the  
nanowires.

FIG. 3 is a FESEM image showing a perspective view of a needle  
zinc oxide nanowire structure according to a second embodiment of the  
present invention.

15 FIG. 4 is an HRTEM image of the cross-sectional sample of of needle  
zinc oxide nanowires grown according to the second embodiment of the  
present invention. The inset shows the corresponding selected-area  
electron diffraction pattern from the nanowires.

FIG. 5 shows a photoluminescence (PL) emission spectrum of a  
20 needle zinc oxide nanowire structure of the first embodiment when excited  
by UV light having a wavelength of 254 nm to generate a pick with a  
wavelength of 380 nm.

FIG. 6 shows field emission characteristics of a needle zinc oxide  
nanowire structure of the first embodiment.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

In the present invention, the method of growing a vertical zinc oxide nanowire array utilizes a furnace vapor deposition process, high purity metal zinc steam and low oxide atmospheric control. In this first embodiment, a silicon wafer substrate with a crystal orientation of  $\langle 100 \rangle$  was employed. A compound layer was grown on its surface. The compound layer comprised a silicon dioxide layer with a thickness of  $0.1\mu\text{m}$ , which was grown on the substrate by a hot oxidation process. A silicon nitride layer with a thickness of  $0.1\mu\text{m}$  was grown on the silicon dioxide layer by a PE-CVD process, and an aluminum doped zinc oxide layer with a thickness of  $0.5\mu\text{m}$ . This Al doping/ZnO/Si<sub>3</sub>N<sub>4</sub>/SiO<sub>2</sub>/Si compound layer was placed in a back end of a quartz pipe in a heater. Zinc oxide (99.999%, 350 mesh, Strem Chemicals) and metal zinc powder (99.999%, 350 mesh, Strem Chemicals) were mixed together 1:1 mole ratio, and moved into an aluminum oxide crucible to be placed in a middle section of the quartz pipe away from the compound substrate by about 20-35 mm. A mechanical pump was employed to set the pressure in the quartz pipe becomes to 10 Torr. The heater used a controller to raise the temperature  $20^{\circ}\text{C}$  every minute until  $500^{\circ}\text{C}$  was reached. Argon gas at 54 sccm and oxygen at 0.1 sccm were introduced into a front end of the quartz pipe, and the reaction was allowed to perform for 3 minutes to grow a flat zinc oxide layer on the compound layer of the silicon substrate. The process conditions were then changed to allow Argon gas at 35 sccm and oxygen at 5 sccm; the

temperature was raised to 550°C, and the reaction time set for 30 minutes. After the reaction had completed and the heater cooled down, a vertical zinc oxide nanowire array had grown on the silicon wafer compound substrate.

## Second Embodiment

5           In this embodiment, a single crystal sapphire substrate with a crystal orientation of  $\langle 100 \rangle$  was provided. The substrate surface was pre-grown with an n-type gallium nitride epitaxial layer with an epitaxy thickness of 1.5 $\mu\text{m}$  (as utilized for manufacturing by some LED companies), and then this n type gallium nitride epitaxial layer/sapphire single crystal compound  
10 substrate was processed followed the steps outlined in the first embodiment to grow a vertical needle zinc oxide nanowire array.

A crystal analysis examination for the zinc oxide nanowires employs an XRD. The nanowire structure was observed by a FESEM, LEO 1530,  
15 operated in the 5 keV working voltage range). Then, an HRTEM was employed to observe the material structure of the zinc oxide nanowires.

FIG. 1 is a FESEM photo of a needle zinc oxide nanowire structure according to a first embodiment, which shows a flat zinc oxide layer grown on the silicon wafer compound substrate, and a vertical needle zinc oxide  
20 nanowire array grown on the flat zinc oxide layer. FIG. 2 shows an HRTEM image of observing a crystal lattice edge of the needle zinc oxide nanowire structure in the first embodiment, and an electron diffraction drawing of its corresponding selected area, which shows that a single needle zinc oxide nanowire is a single 1D nano crystal in a perfect  $\langle 100 \rangle$  growth direction.



FIG. 3 is a FESEM photo of a needle zinc oxide nanowire structure according to the second embodiment, which shows a flat zinc oxide layer grown on the sapphire single crystal compound substrate, and a vertical needle zinc oxide nanowire array grown on the flat zinc oxide layer. FIG. 4 shows an HRTEM image of observing a crystal lattice edge of the needle zinc oxide nanowire structure of the second embodiment, and an electron diffraction drawing of its corresponding selected area, which shows the vertical needle zinc oxide nanowire array grown on the flat zinc oxide layer above the n type gallium nitride epitaxial layer/sapphire single crystal compound substrate.

FIG. 5 shows a PL emission spectrum of the needle zinc oxide nanowire array structure in the first embodiment being excited by UV light with a wavelength of 254 nm to generate a pick with a wavelength of 380 nm.

A sample with the zinc oxide nanowire array structure was placed on a fixed electrode seat. A diffusion pump was employed to control the vacuum in a reaction system, and a distance between the electrode and the needle zinc oxide nanowires was changed to adjust a voltage to measure the field emission characteristics. FIG. 6 shows field emission characteristics of the needle zinc oxide nanowire structure of the first embodiment.

The present invention uses a crystal phase control buffer to change surface crystal characteristics on a substrate for growing a zinc oxide nanowire array. The substrate can be single crystal, polycrystal or an irregular heat-resistant substrate with an amorphous phase, and lithography

technology can be used to pattern the crystal phase control buffer to grow a patterned nanowire array for a subsequent application or device.

Although the present invention has been explained in relation to its preferred embodiment, it is to be understood that many other possible  
5 modifications and variations can be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as hereinafter claimed.